

2018 Chief FOIA Officer Report
Corporation for National and Community Service
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The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) continues to focus on proactively disclosing information to the public. We have also continued to be attentive to excellent customer service.

Proactive Disclosure and Presumption of Openness

CNCS's public website, www.nationalservice.gov, is our primary vehicle for continual improvement of proactive disclosure. In the past year, we have added:

- approximately 175 new site pages
- approximately 30 new landing pages (i.e., top-level webpages)
- 11 new Notice of Funding Availability/Opportunity pages
- about 60 new resource pages in our Knowledge Network section
- About 35 news pages (these are press releases and other news items)
- Several new sections:
 - Mentor.gov splash page
 - Senior Corps Week splash page
 - Serve.gov section
 - Our Impact

Our Budget page contains all of the FY 2018 budget materials, plus historical data.

In FOIA responses in the past year, we fully released the requested records in 27.7% of FOIA requests, and a partial release of records in 44.4% of requests. We made no full denials. The remainder of the requests were withdrawn, were not for agency records, or we found no responsive records.

Timeliness and Backlogs

As in 2017, because our annual number of requests is so small, it is quite unusual for us to acknowledge requests later than the same day they arrive. Our average response time for all simple requests for FY 2017 was 9 days, with a median of 3 days. Average response time for complex track requests was 34 days, with a median of 36. In 26% of requests, we sent the final response in a day or less.

At the end of FY 2017, CNCS had one request backlogged because it was (and is) in consultation with another agency.

Customer Service and a Spirit of Cooperation

CNCS has always reached out to requesters, aimed for high clarity in correspondence, and worked proactively with requesters. During the reporting period, we trained our largest sub-group of employees on their responsibilities under the FOIA. As with the previous year's training, the goal was to improve the thoroughness and timeliness of records searches – in this case, for our largest group of programs.

Also as in previous years, when a request requires clarification or it would benefit the requester if they narrowed the scope of their request, the FOIA Officer contacts the requester within a day, either by email or by phone.

Most recently, a requester asked for a set of records that we provided within a few days. When information that the requester expected to see did not appear in the records we provided and they reached back out to the FOIA Officer, a phone call straightened out the requester's misunderstanding of our program operations, and we were able to revise the request and conduct a new search.

Another requester wanted an enormous set of reports about our grantees. Although we determined that the records could be pulled into a spreadsheet data set, rather than as individual reports, the request was so complex that search time would still be costly. A senior program director, a senior data analyst, and the FOIA Officer have all worked with the requester to tailor the search so that it provides the desired information without being expensive.

Greater Use of Technology

CNCS's Office of Information Technology (OIT) has, over the past year, been transitioning the entire agency to SharePoint file storage. Thanks to SharePoint, agency staff can quickly, easily, and thoroughly search for responsive records and securely share them with the FOIA Officer.

In last year's report, we noted that the agency had created an Open Data Team. This past year the team, led by the Office of Research and Evaluation, with participation from our program offices, the Office of Information Technology, agency attorneys, and the FOIA Officer, has developed a decision and clearance matrix that allows us to respond in the most responsive, secure, efficient, and quick way possible to data-only requests to the agency.